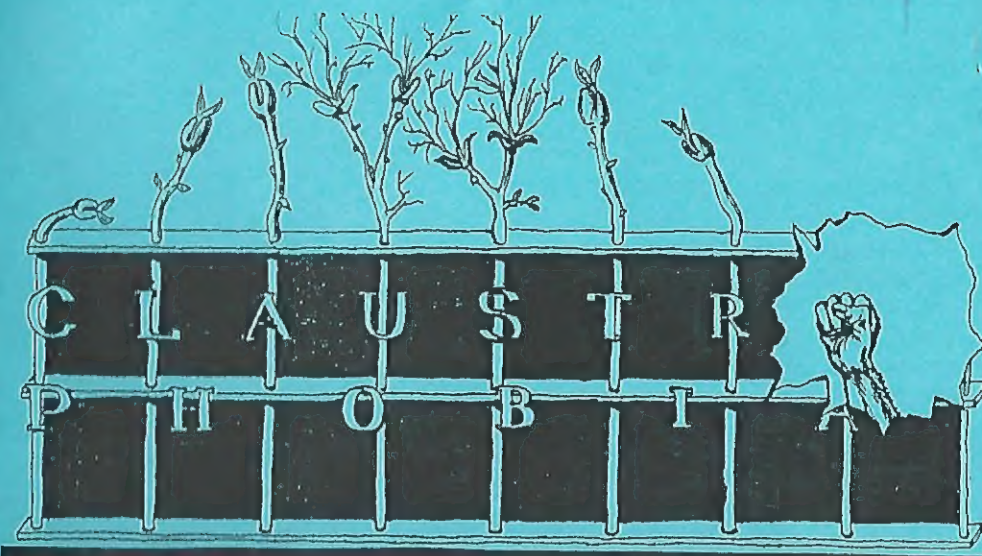


Claustrophobia - ABC
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Am the Spirit
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WINTER 94/95 • CLAUSTROPHOBIA - ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS



"[Crime] prevents us from shopping, from going to ball games and movies, from opening up businesses and hiring workers."
--Va. Gov. Allen
(Washington Times, 11/7/94)

EYES ON VIRGINIA
PRISONS • DC WOMENS
CLASS ACTION SUIT •
DEATH ROW • UNICOR
SLAVE BOSSES • MORE

This is the fourth issue of *Claustrophobia*. To be added to our mailing list, just write us a letter. *Claustrophobia* is free to prisoners and those whose financial situation necessitates it; If you can afford to though, please support our efforts by sending us a few dollars. We are looking for contributions from prisoners or supporters on any relevant topics. We are especially interested in local/regional information.

The guy on the cover is Virginia Governor George Allen.

Claustrophobia is produced by the Claustrophobia-ABC collective in D.C. This issue was produced by bobby, brad, david & than.

The name *Claustrophobia* is taken from a poem (of the same name) by Laura Whitehorn, a revolutionary anti-imperialist political prisoner, which she wrote while in D.C. jail.

This issue of *Claustrophobia* is dedicated to Guy Debord, situationist revolutionary who died in Paris on December 5, 1994.

Claustrophobia-ABC
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Building the Anarchist Black Cross

An update from our collective.



It seems that at this point a major issue facing the ABC network, and definitely one facing our collective, is that of how to ground ourselves and build within existing communities and cultures. We specifically are facing the problem of working with others and drawing people into prison activism while remaining a closed collective for reasons of efficiency, accountability, and security.

We decided to work as a closed collective for various reasons. However, over the past several months in the course of our work, we have seen that there are many other people in DC interested in doing prison solidarity work, and others also in being a part of the Anarchist Black Cross movement. As a group that is already (somewhat) established, we should be doing whatever is necessary to help other people get organized and involved. We decided that we would not use the name "ABC-DC", as that implied that we were the only people in DC working with ABC. Instead, we are only one collective of people - Claustrophobia ABC; and we're definitely looking to work with other people on any of the issues we're working on.

Anarchist Black Cross regional conference

Initial plans are being made for a regional Anarchist Black Cross/prison abolition conference to be held in DC from March 17-19. One day of workshops and discussions will be devoted to building a tighter federation of regional ABC collectives (including Nighterawlers, NJ-ABC, Baltimore ABC, and Claustrophobia) and beginning to implement Komboa Ervin's 15-point program for the ABC network. Another day will be spent learning how we can work with and support other organizations working to free political prisoners and abolish prisons. A focus of the

conference will be furthering dialogue among collectives in this region to bring to next summer's Anarchist Black Cross conference in Toronto.

NJ-ABC (Paterson) has volunteered to coordinate a monthly discussion bulletin leading up to the conference. Contact them if you are interested in attending the conference and receiving the discussion bulletin:

PAC/NJ-ABC
P.O. Box 8532
Paterson, NJ 07508-8532

The Last Mile

by Field Marshall Johnny "ByrdDog" Byrd
SOCF #175145
PO Box 45699
Lucasville, OH 45699-0001

Sunday, March 13th, 1994, at 12:35 pm, exactly 35 hours and 26 minutes before my scheduled, state-sanctioned murder, the "Death Row Escort Squad" arrived at my cell, saying "It's time ByrdDog", "strip" said one. A number of men stood in front of my cell, nervously watching as I shed my clothing, perhaps for the last "strip-search" of my life. After going through the usual routine of "lift em, and spread em", I got dressed, backed up to the cell door, and was handcuffed.

While this was going on, an eerie silence had settled over the entire cellblock. There was none of the usual boisterous yelling, laughter, loud radios or TVs playing—Nothing—complete silence. Then, as I backed out of my cell and started on that long walk, the cellblock erupted into a cacophonous uproar—"Stay Strong", "Good Luck" the voices yelled out to me. As I bid them farewell, I vowed, "I'll represent us ALL well, no matter what happens, Stay Strong!!" meaning that I would not grovel and whine, as some involved in the process would like to see.

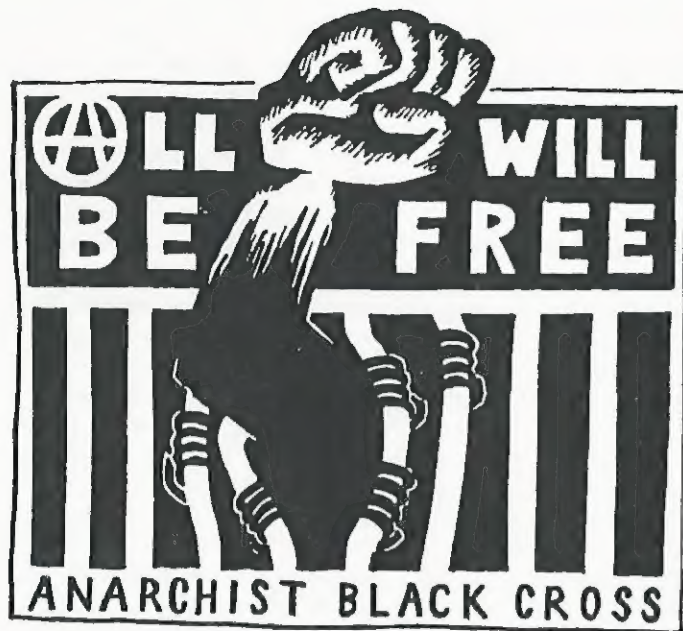
Along the way, as I walked down the long main corridor, loud voices raised in solidarity and encouragement greeted me as I passed each cellblock. The shouts from the cellblocks caused my escorts, as well as the numerous guards that lined the corridor to become alarmed. The fear and terror of the past riot still fresh in their memories. In an effort to make me speed up the leisure pace I had assumed, meeting each and every eye along the way, they started walking faster. I maintained my stride, and soon they slowed down, resigned to the pace I had set.

Upon arriving in the J-1 Super-Max, I was once again strip-searched and my regular death row clothing were exchanged for death house clothing. "Odd", I thought to myself, "what difference does what one is wearing have on the fact of one's impending death?!"

The atmosphere of the Death House was smothering, suffocating, as if there were a shortage of oxygen. Everyone moved as if in slow motion. Their every move seeming to have been thoroughly rehearsed, learned, robot-like professionalism, as now, for the first time in over thirty years, they, the elite Death Squad had been called upon to commit murder in the name of the State of Ohio. In some of their eyes I saw fear, concern, and revulsion—in others, sadistic glee. Looking at each one of them with steady unblinking eyes, I sized them up individually.

Shortly after entering the death cell proper, my attorneys arrived to inform me as to the current state of my situation. We discussed this at great length, and I felt confident that everything possible was being done to halt the insidious plot to murder me that had been set in motion by the State of Ohio.

After enjoying the time spent with my lawyers, I immediately contacted my woman, and later, other family members on the phone that had been provided. I attempted as best I could to assuage their worries and fears. With each one I tried to explain the situation, based on my knowledge and information provided to me by my lawyers. This was very difficult, given that they were all well aware of the appeals process, and knew that this latest attempt by the State of Ohio to murder me was simply a political move, and not based upon law. I still wanted to calm their fears, give them strength, and assure them all that everything was under control and my lawyers on top of everything—every move the state was trying to make.



For the most part, I remained in constant contact with my woman and family by phone, and was permitted to have a couple short visits with my lovely woman, engaging in spirited conversation with some of the people who had come down from the Ohio Public Defenders office, and was truly touched by them.

At times, there were periods when time seemed to stand still, then suddenly speed up. I was offered food, but refused to eat, fearing that it may have been "doctored up" with drugs to make me less resistant and responsive. This refusal was not based on some unreasonable paranoia, but through years of incarceration. I know first hand just how devious prison officials can be, and I wasn't about to take any chances! The whirlwind of activity continued around me, and as night approached, there was no thought of sleep in my mind. Throughout the night I was on the phone talking to people I haven't heard from in years. Everyone expressing their support, love, concern, and pledging their assistance

Monday morning, March 14th, 1994, was indeed a "Blue Monday" for us all as we learned of the apparent, unprecedented and mean spirited tactics being employed by the "honorable" Carl Rubin, the judge assigned to my case. It seems that even though he had my writ of habeas corpus and motion for a stay of execution before him since March 7th, he decided to wait until the "eleventh hour" before making a ruling, knowing full well that the situation was critical, and time was of the essence. An example of the insidious plot he had hatched in his muddled mind began when he instructed two of my attourneys to meet in his chambers at noon. At the conclusion of the meeting, he informed my attorneys that he would deny my motion for a stay of execution, and that he would issue his ruling at appx. 3 pm—nine hours before my scheduled execution! He made this ruling with full knowledge that it was legally wrong, but in keeping with his "personal" feeling about the length of time my appeal was taking, as he stated on one occasion, "...there comes a time

when all of this must come to an end." Now he had appointed himself the Supreme litigator—usurping the power of the United States Supreme Court, as well as that of his own District Court. Had it not been for the tireless efforts of my attorneys, who fought gallantly, he may well have succeeded. Through their efforts, an emergency panel of the Sixth Circuit Court convened and issued as stay of execution around 6:30pm.

Not to be outdone, Ohio Governor George V. Voinavitch personally contacted his friend Ohio Attorney General Lee Fisher to form a pack and went to the United States Supreme Court, asking them to dissolve the stay of execution, and order my murder to occur as scheduled. This move was purely political, both having political aspirations with elections coming up this year, knowing how profitable jumping on the "Kill us quick" Bandwagon is.

After the U.S. Supreme Court in its entirety had convened, they declined to lift the stay of execution at appx. 11:30pm. Everyone breathed a great sigh of relief, including, I might add, the correctional officers that had been present during the whole ordeal. Around 12:20am Tuesday morning, I was again escorted, however this time back to Death Row. Again the corridors were filled with loud cheers and good wishes, but it was when I arrived back on the "row" that I received the most thunderous ovations. Everyone had been following the events closely as they unfolded over the TV and radio, and were all aware that I was coming back.

In the aftermath of Judge Carl Rubin's machinations with my case, he was removed from further involvement. This indicates and validates my previously held suspicions that he was overtly prejudicial towards me and my case, all death row prisoners, and was losing his judicial temperament. To him, the bench from which he's

supposed to make decisions based upon law, had instead become a soapbox, upon which he had climbed to orate his personal convictions! For those that are chomping at the bit for my death, complaining about the length of time my appeal is taking, it doesn't matter whether I'm innocent or not—all they want is to have their blood lust sated. Nothing else matters, "Damn Justice," "Give Us The Body" they cry.

Many people have written and asked what it's like being on Death Row, being sent to the death house, and coming within thirty minutes of being murdered by the State? Why I refused to eat my "last meal", and why I chose the electric chair instead of lethal injection? I will try to answer these questions based on my personal experience, as I'm sure it differs from some others that have been as fortunate as myself. To walk into the very Jaws of the Beast, and walk out again. Sadly, this has not been the case for many throughout this country that are similarly situated.

Being on Death Row, in and of itself, is a form of death. The environment sucks the life from you, and the passing of a single day at times can be but a blink of an eye, or as long as a heartbreaking life. Then there's the drudgery, the soul wrenching monotony of staring at the same steel and concrete, the same people, ad nauseam. Being taken to the Death House is, in a way, a relief. Finally one is afforded the opportunity to confront ones killers, who cowardly hide behind the mask of shamelessness. To look into their eyes, to smell their raw fear, and to feel ones strength being pitted against the ultimate sanction -- Death.

As for the so-called last meal, and my refusal to eat it and other meals, as I said earlier, years of conditioned paranoia, coupled with exigencies of events going on around me, eating was the furthest thing from my mind.

I chose the electric chair because I refuse to give any credence to the States attempt to contrive any rationale for its murders by offering a lethal injection as a "more humane" form of murder. If they were going to kill me, I was intent on making it as ghastly as possible for all that bore witness to it.

What went through my mind during those thirty six hours were thoughts of my woman, people that I care about and love, and what my death would do to them. I was hoping for the best, and expecting the worst. Those thirty six hours were devoted to the ones that I care about and love. I had to keep my wits about myself, because as I saw it, it was up to me to give the ones I love and care about strength. I had to maintain courage in the face of adversity, so that their burden would not be overbearing. Their love and support had sustained me all this time, and it was my turn to show and give them strength.

There is a plague in this country that is being controlled and manipulated by politicians, judges, prosecutors, police, professional victims, and victim's rights groups. Until society

faces what's really going on in this country and starts wanting real answers for what's going on in our streets, a number of innocent people are going to be put to death, or imprisoned for the rest of their lives. This attitude of "Lock them up and kill them" is not the answer. Who do you think are going to be the ones filling our Death Rows, prisons and jails? Open your eyes before it's too late. The future of this society is at stake until YOU the PEOPLE take off your blindfolds and look at the real problems, dealing with them rather than sweeping them under the rug with a quick fix that has never worked. Crime is nothing new, the way it is dealt with is a reflection of the Society we live in. The reflection I see is the Holocaust against the poor and less fortunate.

To all the Brothers and Sisters, mothers and fathers who are on Death Row, jails and prisons throughout this country, or struggling to get through the day to put food on the table, Stay Strong and don't give up. Stop turning on each other and stand United against the oppressors and raise your voices in Unity!

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA SMITH SENIOR COUNSEL IN THE DC WOMEN PRISONERS' CLASS ACTION CIVIL SUIT

(This interview was conducted on December 7th with Brenda Smith, who served as co-council in a recent lawsuit in which a group of female inmates at various facilities operated by the District of Columbia filed a class action suit on behalf of all women prisoners in DC, claiming that they were systematically denied privileges and opportunities available to men in equivalent situations and that the institutionalized patriarchy within the prison system made for an atmosphere of harassment, abuse, rape, and degradation that constituted a violation of human and constitutional rights. The case is still pending; for more details, contact us or the Nat'l Women's Law Center: 1616 P St. NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 328-5160.)

This interview was done by david.

Claustrophobia: Could you introduce yourself?

Brenda Smith: My name is Brenda Smith and I am the senior counsel at the National Womens Law Center, and I direct the Center's women in prison project.

C: Could you describe the issues of the case.

BS: I'll talk a little about the case and how it got started. I think the genesis of the case actually has been coming for many years. For many years the National Women's Law Center has worked with women in the criminal justice system. We started a series of focus groups in 1989 talking to women in the prisons about what kinds of services they wanted, what kind of information they wanted. Based on those interviews with women at the jail and with women at the minimum security annex we started doing weekly legal seminar series and what happened was the legal seminar series was very directed by the women. Whatever it was they wanted in terms of the agenda we did it so for example the people had real concerns about what was going on in the parole process; people had real concerns about what was going on about custody, or medical care. We would bring in people in the community and in the prison system who had some sort of ability to change what was happening. After the women started receiving information they really did become a lot more...militant, I don't want to say militant, but a lot more active about asserting their rights and they really began to notice that the kinds of services provided to men were not really being provided for women and also in many instances women were subject to greater punishment for very minor offenses and that was different from what was going on with men. So in about 1992 we started doing some investigation and really exploring what was going on with women in about six different areas. The first was in the area of medical care, particularly looking at women-specific medical issues like prenatal care, services for parenting and not just for pregnant women, but also post-partum women, looking at AIDS services for women, gynecological care. The second big area that we looked at was sanitation and conditions of confinement. We found when we looked at the very substandard facilities that women were living in, infestations of roaches and rats, lack of water, lack of sanitary supplies, like feminine hygiene products, sanitary napkins, toilet paper, things like that -- basic stuff. Then we started to look at educational and vocational programs for women which were really nonexistent. We found that there were a great number of programs which were offered to men, and women were not allowed into these programs because of the fears about security and so all of the fears about security were dropped at the doorstep of the women...

C: That seemed like it was an excuse all throughout the case, like not being allowed to go to the bathroom...

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BS: Exactly, that was exactly it so, we did some investigation on that. Another big issue was on the whole issue of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment. We found that the problem of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment against women prisoners within the prison system by correctional officers was just out of control. It was pervasive, it was violent and it took all kinds of different forms, from rape to coerced sex to what prison officials would like to call consensual sex by women who were exchanging sex for food or favors such as being able to use the phone, better work assignments, things like that.

C: How has the case been going and what sort of remedies are being sought?

BS: Well just in terms of how the case has gone, we went to trial in June. We had a three week trial from June 13 to the beginning of July. I think that the trial went very well. I think there were issues we were stronger on than others but I believe we met our burden of proof on all the issues. We're still waiting for a decision from the court. I also think that just from the perspective of public education that the case was really a very big success because our case was really the first case where women prisoners in DC really came out and talked about the problems they were facing. Generally what happens is you hear it from men, and one thing I want to make clear is that this litigation is not about men prisoners versus women prisoners. What it really is about is the prison system, which doesn't meet the needs of anybody whose in the prison system, whether they are male or female. And they find it easy to ignore women because women are less organized. They don't have the same history of activism within the prisons and within the jails, and they are also much more easily intimidated physically. And so I think that it was really a watershed in the history of the women's prisoner movement here in this city. So from that point of view I think that its been a really big success. We're waiting for a decision from the court and we've asked for a number of different remedies. We submitted a proposed finding of facts and conclusions of law and we also submitted a proposal for remedial order which I can provide you but essentially we've asked for women specific health care that meets the standards that you meet in the community, meet the ACOF standards. In particular around medical care, its important, you have a group of women who are very high-risk with regard to almost every kind of gynecological disease, with regard to breast cancer, uterine cancer, cervical cancer, and there's really no preventive health care. There's no aggressive intervention. With regard to prenatal care, even though you have women who would be defined by any definition as high risk pregnancies -- poor nutrition, alcohol and drug use, out on the street, poor prenatal care history -- you have a situation where women will come in and they will be pregnant and they would not get to the doctor until a month or two until it was time for them to deliver. They have spent their entire pregnancies in prison. And its particularly troubling that all the pregnant women are at the Correctional Treatment Facility which is less than probably 500 feet away from a public hospital, DC General, which is where prisoners receive their medical care. So we've asked for changes that way. With regard to the sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, we have pinpointed and targeted specific problems that women have faced in the system. First of all, what happens is those cases are not investigated. The prisoners word is never ever taken as truth. Its always assumed that she's lying. If it comes down to a decision between believing a prisoner and believing a correctional officer, they're not going to believe the prisoner and they do that because they really don't have any process for investigating. It doesn't have to be that you take this persons word or you take that person word. You get somebody who is an investigator who knows how to find corroborating evidence. They don't have anything like that. To the extent that there is some sort of investigation done, it is done by people who are self-interested. It is done by other correctional officers. We have asked for outside investigations and an outside panel to handle this. We've also asked for specific sanctions for sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, which go from a verbal reprimand, to putting information in your personnel file, to termination. With regard to educational deficiencies we've asked that women be granted access to the same kinds of opportunities as the men have. I just don't think there's any way to justify that for example, men have a college program and women have no college program, or that men have access to carpentry or brick masonry skills and women have access to house keeping course. That can't be right. So we've asked for that. With regard to conditions, we've really asked that they clean up their act. You know I think if citizens knew how people were living they would be shocked. Maybe they would say "you got what you deserve", but I think they

would be shocked to know about the filth in these prisons, also the serious health risks that it poses, not just to the prisoners, but those people go back out to the communities as well. TB control is non-existent and that's a real problem because that's an airborne disease.

C: So its supposed to be a "correctional" system and yet every possible indignity and trauma, that people are put through, and there's nothing there to support them or give them any strength. I mean it really undercuts the idea that there is any "correctional" intent.

BS: I think that that's true but I also think that one of the things that we have to be real clear about is that this is not...I don't think that our penal system is about any kind of correctional intent. I think that it really is that you got ten thousand people that you need to move off the street and you got to put them some place and what you're gonna do is have them in a situation where you can control them and I think that that is the way the corrections people look at it. But even with that as a motive there not doing a very good job. We have many problems in terms of security, people sneaking things in, because what's happening is you're having changes in behavior people are not going to jeopardize what they have in order to be security risks and lose the privileges that they have and even if there whole raison d'etre is security, they would do a much better job of security if they had better programs, better sanitation because you wouldn't have this sort of chronic discontent that you have within the prison system. There's going to be a whole level of discontent because people are there against their will, but you wouldn't necessarily have the same kinds of organized struggles, the dissatisfaction, and discontent that people have and they are very justified. One of the things that I've found a lot of times is that people can put up with a lot of stuff if they kind of know what the parameters are. I think that one the things about our system is there are no parameters, there are no rules, there are no guidelines. Things change from day to day, from hour to hour and its just whatever you need to do in order to keep this system going. Its really a system thats pinned together with bubble gum.

C: It seems like that's part of its strategy. It seems like arbitrary power exerted over people is like a psychological tool to keep people subject, so you're always off balance.

BS: Right, when we first started doing our programs in prison we thought they would be extremely non-controversial, it wasn't like we were doing individual legal services. We were really going in to provide people with information. You know, you identify what it is you want to hear about, we'll get the speakers together we'll bring them out. We'll do this thing for two hours every Friday, we won't ask the prison to give us any money. Its totally funded by outside sources and so its totally nothing that they had to be concerned about, or at least we thought and what it really was was the information, that was the thing that became very threatening. What happened was that we were coming in and saying what there policies were and that was very troubling because most prisoners don't know what the policies are, because they don't have access to libraries. Even if they do have access to libraries they don't have the most up to date information in them. Often times the case managers, the people who are supposed to be doing the social work with the prisoners, they don't even know what the policies are and the policy may say one thing but in practice something different is done. And so I think that you are right about the whole sense of arbitrary power, and one of the ways to be able to do that is to keep information away from people.

C: Is the situation of women in DC prisoners any worse than its is for women in other parts of the country and if you won this case would that make precedent in other areas?

BS: Well I think that our case in many ways is very different from the kinds of cases in other jurisdiction for example our case is one of the few cases that included along with the conditions stuff, it included the sexual misconduct and sexual harassment because that's really an area where most people and most litigators have been really afraid to touch

C: Why's that?

BS: I think that because its very difficult to get women to talk about it its sorta like the dirty secret that goes on in every jurisdiction but that nobody talks about I think because people think that its sorta sordid and reinforces those old b-movie stereotypes. And the reality is its not like the b-movie stereotypes, its really worse. And I think that its worse because the women really are just like commodities. I mean, they're traded back and forth by correctional officers in exchange for drugs and food and stuff like that and that's really pretty vile. In terms

of the situation for women in DC I think its pretty much the same for women in other states. I think that in most states if you do a comparison of what women receive and what men receive you're going to find that there are some really serious inequities and I think that if we are successful in our case that it will have the ripple effect of causing other jurisdictions to take a look at what's going on in their states and challenge them. But the other thing that's different is that our judiciary is very different here than the judiciary in other states. In some states they're really conservative. They're very hostile to cases involving prisoners, in particular in the eighth circuit out in Nebraska, very very bad situation, some of the southern states, really really really bad. And so while the situation is the same I don't know if the result will be the same.

C: The other thing that seemed interesting to me was that alot of the things being sued in this case like sexual harrassment, and bad prenatal care, poor health care, unsanitary conditions, and just general impoverished living situations are prevalent outside of prison but they are being sued inside prison first because there is this legalistic context.

BS: Well there is a constitutional obligation to provide these services and the thing is, its actually an interesting point, I mean, I think that out in the community you can make more of an argument that services are there and they're available and what happens is that there are barriers and people don't avail themselves of those services. You know if you have a situation where someone is pregnant, they say "I want to go over to the doctor," and what happens is they're told, "yeah, you have an appointment," and then they're not transported over. Its a much clearer situation.

C: Yeah... its an absolute situation of what happens outside.

BS: Right, but the only difference is on the outside there is no obligation to pick anybody up and take them to premium care. In this instance, because people don't have their freedom, there is an obligation. I think the other thing too is in the area of education and vocational programming. I think that what the law says particularly as it relates to men and women is that if you make a decision that you're going to provide services to one group then you've got to provide the same kinds of services to the other group. So I mean one of the things some jurisdictions have done, and I would not be surprised if DC did this, that they just cut back services, and they're just not going to provide services to anybody. And that may be one way for them to get out of their litigation. But ultimately, its really short-sighted. Because if you have a situation where people are not doing anything, then they're going to tear down your system. Folks are going to tear down your system because there's nothing for them to think about except that they're here, that this time is not productive. The other reality is that most of the people in our system who are doing time, and particularly the women, 90% are there on non-violent offences, most of them drug-related. 70% are directly drug-related -- possession, sale, distribution, attempted distribution. The others are burglary, theft; you've got all these parole violaters who haven't even committed any crime, they just don't make it on parole, and so they're back. And so you just have a situation where people feel a tremendous amount of injustice about being there anyway. The primary problem is not that they are "bad people" so to speak, but people who have some serious health problems. Problems like alcohol and drug addiction. So we have a situation where these people are not doing anything, then you're going to have behavior that's meant to strike out at the system. You're going to have alot of sex because there is nothing else for people to do. You're going to have alot of drugs. You're going to have alot of fights and stuff like that. And there's alot of literature that shows that decreases in violent security problems are directly tied to the presence of programs in your system.

C: It makes you wonder what they're trying to foster.

BS: Well its not a priority, it really isn't a priority. Its very easy, and its politically sellable to dump on people in prison.

C: And riots and things like that as a result of cutbacks are a perfect excuse to really close things down.

BS: And come down on people and say that "Oh, they rioted and this really shows that they are the scum of the earth that you think they are anyway"

C: Well I guess that's all the questions I had. Is there anyway that people not involved in the trial can help out?

BS: I think that one of the things that we have to continue to do, particularly now because there's been such a great delay, between the time of the trial and ultimately when we get a decision is that we have to step up our efforts to document what's going on and so I think that after Christmans starting in January we're going to be stepping up our efforts again to go back in and document "this is what's going on" because when we ultimately get a decision I'm sure that the court counsel office is going to say that "Oh this stuff is over its not happening anymore". So that's one of the big pieces of work we're going to do in the new year. We're also going to be distributing a survival manual for women prisoners.

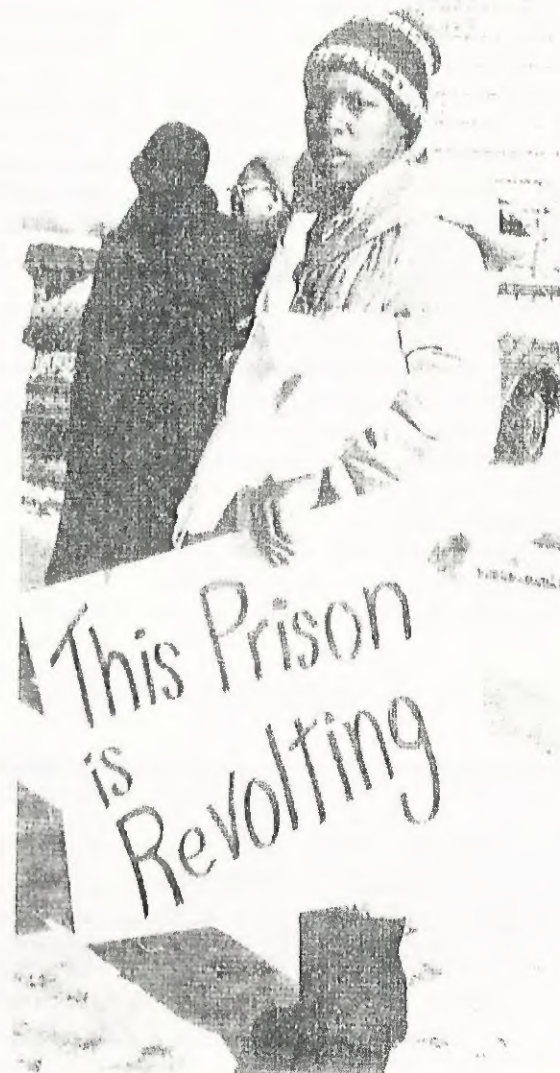
C: Is it hard to distribute this in the prison?

BS: We're just going to take it out and give it to people so to that extent it won't be difficult but we really want to get the word out that its there that its available. Yeah, its targeted towards DC folks but alot of the information that's in there will be really useful to other people as well.

since this interview took place...

On 13 December, a Senior District Court judge ruled in favor of the class action suit. She "gave the department [of corrections] six months to develop a harassment policy, set up a harassment hotline, hire a nurse-midwife and a physician's assistant trained in gynecology, open a prenatal clinic, stop shackling inmates in labor, educate female inmates on a par with men and repair women's facilities, including the heating systems..."

This means that the DOC is now legally required to treat women prisoners on par with men. Lawyers will continue to monitor the situation. However, we can hardly count this a major victory - the treatment of male prisoners is none too commendable either; the D.C. Jail and several other facilities are already under a court order because of poor conditions for men...



ABC Emergency Response Network

At the ABC conference in NYC this August an Emergency Response Network" (ERN) was begun as one of the projects of the emerging network. Regional contacts have been established and within those regions phone-trees and other rapid response communication networks are being developed. Clearly, the larger and more inclusive the ERN is the better it will be able to come to the aid of prisoners. So it is important that all groups and individuals who are interested in taking action for prisoners who are under attack, get in touch with the regional ERN contact.

For New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania

Nightcrawlers ABC
Box 1034
Bronx, NY 10454
Voicemail (212) 802-4544

For the American South

Black Fist
15110 Bellaire Box 317
Houston, TX 77083
Voicemail (713) 315-1211

For DC, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and West Virginia

Claustrophobia ABC
Box 77432
Washington, DC 20013
Voicemail c/o beehive
(202) 667-2524

For Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois

Minneapolis ABC
Box 7075
Minneapolis, MN 55407

For California

Prison Activist Resource Center - Network
Against Control Units
P.O. Box 3201
Berkeley, CA 94703

For Canada

Prison News Service
P.O. Box 5052, Station A
Toronto, Ont M5W 1W4

--- Other Addresses ---

Midsouth Anarchist Collective (MAC) is a network of prisoners through the Atlanta, Memphis, Little Rock, and Oklahoma City areas working collectively to communicate, educate, and agitate around prison issues. For mutual support and collaborative effort, write to:
Philip M. Wheat
MSU 87971 MAC
2501 State Farm Rd.
Tucker, AR 72168-9503

Out of Time is the newsletter of Out Of Control - Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners. It contains regular updates on a number of important cases and issues, with a focus on California. It is available from:
Out of Control Lesbian Committee
3543 18th Street, Box 30
San Francisco, CA 94110

Prisoners Testicles Radiated in 1960s & 70s

by brad

A decade-long research project was done on prisoners in the 1960s and into the 1970s in Oregon and Washington State Prisons. It was funded by the Atomic Energy Commission (now the Department of Energy) and NASA, and was supposedly designed to help determine how much radiation U.S. astronauts could bear during spaceflights.

One hundred thirty-one inmates "voluntarily" participated in the experiments in which they lay down in a coffin-like box and had their testicles lowered into water. Then the "researchers" exposed their testicles to a dose of radiation stronger than 20 modern diagnostic X-rays. Many inmates went through the experiment many times. Some of the prisoners were exposed to as much as 640 rads, an amount that is potentially fatal if spread over the whole body.

For participating in the experiments, the prisoners received a \$5-a-month stipend. They were told that they were performing a patriotic duty for their country.

Today more than half of the 131 participants have died. Many complain of major groin pains, persistent rashes and painful lumps on their testicles.

One participant reported one of his testicles became attached to his scrotum as a result of the biopsies after the experiment.

The experiments were to aid the space program, in the U.S.'s attempts to colonize outer space before the Soviet Union. But the actual effect of the experiments on the prisoners was to make them sterile or unable to reproduce—in effect, genocide. In fact, the prisoners who participated in the experiment were "encouraged" to get vasectomies afterward.

These experiments of the 60s and 70s show that historically prisoners are seen as less-than-human by the U.S. government, and are fair game for "medical experimentation" as cruel as that performed by the outright fascist states in the 1930s. These types of experiments are always performed on groups of people that are seen as "expendable" by the government, and in the U.S. that has typically been prisoners, racial minorities, and people with disabilities.

While some rules passed by the NIH in 1978 bar use of prisoners "in any medical experiments that do not benefit them", the state continues to treat prisoners as less-than-human, and continues to find newer and more devious ways to commit murder of genocidal proportions against people in prison.

Source: Washington Post 11/20/94

To all of our readers in the DC area: we are trying to make *Claustrophobia* available free at various locations around the city because we deal with important local issues. We thank you for taking the time to read this. However, it does cost money to print *Claustrophobia*, as well as to mail out free copies. So if you support our work, please send a few dollars to cover a subscription.

Eyes on Virginia Prisons

Virginia Plans to Arm More Prison Guards in Maximum Security Units

by brad

Virginia officials are planning to tighten the screws on prisoners in a way done in only a few states in the U.S.—by arming guards *within* the perimeters of its maximum-security prisons. Prison guards in watchtowers traditionally have guns, but few states regularly give guns to the guards inside the prisons.

Virginia state Corrections Director Ronald J. Angelone instituted the new policy, which he also instituted in Nevada when he was state prison director there. Speaking on the new policy, Angelone said, "I'm not vindictive. I don't want to hurt people. ... If [prisoners] make an adult decision to hurt somebody, I'm going to hurt them first." Prison officials in Nevada say the gun-toting policy 'works well', and most shootings result in only 'minor wounds'. That must provide little comfort to the people on the receiving end of the guards' blasts.

Angelone says shotguns loaded with birdshot will be the weapons used in Virginia, and that guards will be instructed to fire toward the ground so that it ricochets into "disruptive" inmates' legs. Some weapons will also carry live bullets.

Experience with similar policies in California show that prisoners have reason to be fearful of guards toting guns. There, 33 prisoners have been shot to death in the last ten years, which is far more than in any other state prison system. Virginia will be the first state on the East Coast to allow guards to carry guns inside the residential areas.

Virginia ACLU director Kent Willis opposed the new gun-toting policy, saying, "[Angelone] simply brings a 19th-century version of corrections to the prison system ... it goes back to the old lock-'em-up philosophy, and part of that is having the guards armed to the hilt."

The 'arms buildup' in Virginia's prison seems to be in preparation for the coming massive increase in the prison population, as a result of Governor Allen's successful bid to abolish parole. Parole will be abolished for all crimes committed after January 1st in Virginia, which will cause the prison population to double by 2005, and to reach 180% of supposed capacity. This will inevitably lead to organizing, protesting, and uprisings by prisoners against the overcrowded and inhuman conditions. In fact it already has—on the day the

state legislature started debating Gov. Allen's plan September 19, uprisings occurred in two southern Virginia prisons. Many of the state prisons were then put on lockdown for extended periods immediately afterward.

The plan to give more guns to guards can only lead to tragedy. With tensions in Virginia prisons running high, guards will be tempted to use all means of authority to maintain "order". Prisoners will be shot and killed as a result of this new measure. Those of us inside and outside prisons must speak out and oppose this new policy in whatever ways we can.

(Source: Washington Post, 11/26/94)

To protest the measure, write or call or fax:

• *Corrections Dir. Ronald J. Angelone*
(804) 674-3018

• *Public Safety Sec. Jerry W. Kilgore*
(804) 786-5351

• *Governor Allen*
PO Box 1475, Richmond, VA 23212
(804) 786-2211; fax (804) 786-3985

We encourage prisoners in Virginia, Maryland and DC to contact us about conditions and struggles in your prison (and write updates like this for future issues of Claustrophobia), so we can pass on the information directly from the source, and organize on the outside in support of prisoners struggles for dignity and justice. You can reach us at Claustrophobia ABC, PO Box 77432, Washington DC 20013.

Five Virginia Prisoners Escape

A group of five inmates at medium-security Harrisonburg Correctional Unit No. 8 escaped on November 25 during an inmate count. It was the largest breakout at a Virginia prison since Thanksgiving 1984. The inmates locked up two prison guards and beat two others, using a broom handle and an inmate's plaster wrist cast, then stole a guard's car to make the escape. The five were recaptured separately near Richmond on November 26 and 27th. (Source: Washington Post 11/28/94)

No Veggies Allowed...

A jailed Baltimore Ploughshares activist is being punished for practicing vegetarianism at the Federal Correctional Institute in Alderson, WV. One of the "Goldsboro Four" Pax Christi-Spirit of Life Ploughshares activists incarcerated this summer for various convictions pertaining to acts of civil disobedience at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in 12/93, Lynn Fredriksson was assigned to work in the federal prison's kitchen. She refused to handle meat products in the course of her duties and was placed in "disciplinary segregation" in mid-October. Prison officials have not granted her request to be assigned prison duties that would enable her to work without violating her spiritual beliefs.

For more information, contact Max Obuszewski at (410) 243-7695

Three Arrested at Haiti Solidarity Demo at CIA HQ

On October 31, three peace activists were arrested at CIA headquarters after requesting a meeting with CIA Director R. James Woolsey to discuss the agency's activities in Haiti. Police ordered the 55 protesters from the Atlantic Life Community to leave and arrested three who refused, including Catholic Worker activist Jim Keane of D.C. The activists are charged with "obstructing the passage of others" and face up to a year in jail and a \$2500 fine. The trial in Fairfax County, Virginia is scheduled for December 13.

For more information, contact Max Obuszewski at (410) 243-7695

Powhatan still under administrative lockdown

by Vincent X

A food service employee [free person] lost a paring knife in the kitchen area this past August. The whole institution was ordered locked down until the small knife was found. Seven hundred men have suffered various degrees of indignities and restrictions as a result of this state employee's negligence. Some of the restrictions I shall chronicle for you.

All inmate movement stopped immediately and a memorandum issued from Warden Guillory that we would remain on total lock-down restrictions until the kitchen knife the state employee lost was found. The restrictions included absolutely no visits for the first 30 days, even though some of the men who were assigned to the prison industry [tag shop] were forced to go to work and return to their cell restriction after a long days work with the only amenity afforded the workers being a daily shower. Showers were not allowed the rest of the prison population but once every 7-10 days. Bed linens were changed only once every two or three weeks. Under clothes were likewise exchanged every three weeks. The cells in which everyone is confined 24 hours a day have no hot water. Our store privileges were restricted to one time a week with ten items allowed to be purchased each week. No recreation was given at all and phone calls were allowed only for the limited purpose of informing our families of the no visiting policy.

About two weeks ago (November) a limited inmate movement plan was implemented at Powhatan. That is supposed to be permanent now. Only two outside recreation days are now scheduled per week if the weather permits. But we are now allowed a couple of hours a day outside of our cells here inside the building in small

groups. Our visits were permanently cut to a maximum of 8 hours per visitor per month. This is a drastic cut from our previous 48 hours per month allowance! Our daily commissary visits are permanently cut to once per week now. Our weekend videos are no longer allowed.

I would like to emphasize that NOT ONE INMATE here at Powhatan has engaged in ANY misbehavior to deserve or earn these restrictions arbitrarily imposed by Warden Guillory. Our families are formally "put on punishment" if you will by the policies and practices of Warden Guillory. At a time in this nation when family ties need strengthening and family values roll of the tongue of every preacher and politician in the country, Powhatan Correctional Center is hard at work to destroy our families and the cherished relationships with our children, and foster resentment in inmates and families. The visiting room at Powhatan remains half empty for want of visitors who are regularly asked to leave when the strictly monitored clock runs out, regardless of the space available and lack of any visitors awaiting admittance. Adding insult to injury, Warden Guillory charged the inmates at Powhatan \$8,500.00 out of our inmate trust fund for "improvements in the visiting room." We are charged exorbitantly for a facility we are being denied fair and adequate use of. This is a sore spot with everyone here. Even the inmates who do not get a visit, or seldom get one, will have to weigh the extreme restrictions placed on visiting into the equation when deciding whether or not to even try to get a visit. The new restrictive policy is a true deterrent to visiting. Often, more time is spent traveling and getting processed into and out of the visiting room than is allowed a visitor with their loved ones.

While on total lock-down and being

fed in our cells there was a noticeable decline in both the quality and quantity of the food. Once the food enters the cell blocks it often sets for over an hour before being served. Cold food is even worse when the regular infestation of roaches and ants get first shot at our food! The sanitation surrounding serving meals in the cells is deplorable. The same guards who serve our food serve double duty as janitors, handling mop buckets and sweeping filth from the floors, handling and dispensing mail packing up inmates property and dirty clothes who are transferred to maximum security housing, etc. Then without a change of clothes, wearing their same dirty blue uniforms and no face mask, without the required daily inspections by the food service manager to detect open wounds or sores or doctors visits to screen for possibility of communicable diseases of skin rashes, they rush headlong in a food service function for which they have absolutely no training or aptitude of medical clearance to perform. They may have cold viruses or flu bugs but they are still required to handle our food. Thus we are at the mercy of any communicable germ they may harbor and spread in protection of the public - supposedly that includes inmates, but evidently not Powhatan inmates.

While confined in our cells for the first ninety days of this lockdown, which started in August of this year, we were not supplied with cleaning materials for weeks at a time. And once we were given cleaning supplies, the disinfectant and cleaning liquids are all weakened with water so as to render them ineffective. That exacerbates the already substandard sanitation and allows roaches, spiders, and especially ants to flourish. Roaches are in heaven here since no one is allowed to possess trash plastic bags any more to store trash and food in, nor are trash cans allowed to be lined with plastic trash bags. There are no sanitary receptacles provided to receive our uneaten food and trays for hours if at all after we eat. Ants are so

pervasive they get into our bed, books, anywhere and everywhere. The ants are so tiny they can gain entry into practically any container, crack or crevice in this dirty, dilapidated building. Many window panes in the 12" by 18" frames are missing and fortified with cardboard, especially in the showers, which by the way have had the doors removed to increase drafty winds that regularly swirl though while you are wet and shivering. It is degrading and strips yet another level of our dignity, privacy, and self-respect, both for the inmates who have to live directly in full frontal view of the showers and for the men who are forced to expose and display themselves in front of others. If this building I live in were an apartment building in the free world it would be under condemnation orders, but since it is prison housing only society's forgotten and discarded we are allowed to be forced into substandard, unsanitary, unhealthy housing.

Well, Virginia has had a certified grievance procedure longer than any state in America. It is a blatant fraud perpetrated on the U.S. Government to the detriment of everyone. Grievances go unanswered if at all until long after the guidelines limits expire. And often the answers make no sense and do not respond to the questions raised. The "certified" grievance procedure is cruel hoax on the inmates and the public. In the Virginia Department of Corrections there are no checks and balances, only further oppression.

Here at Powhatan Correctional Center there is a steady deterioration of sanitation, health, safety, family relationships, self-respect, self-esteem, respect for authority, and inmate morale. I think in astonishment at the great deal of restraint, patience and understanding shown by the body of inmates here at Powhatan Correctional Center. Since we have little else to lose, caged and contained behind these many coils of barbed wire fences, we understand shotguns with birdshot to enforce their regime of restrictions and oppression.

Maximum Security Prison Planned for Northampton, VA

Will it House a Control Unit?

Governor Allen's office announced in early November that the Department of Corrections has signed an option to buy an 108-acre farm about 1/4 mile southeast of Route 13 near the main road into Cape Charles. "The construction of this prison is an important step for the implementation of our truth-in-sentencing and parole-abolition plan," Allen said.

The Northampton prison will house some of the state's "most dangerous people," according to corrections officials. It will hold 1,267 inmates, employ 425 people, and have an annual operating budget of more than \$18 million. If the General Assembly approves funding, it could open in the fall of 1998.

Tom Harris, Northampton administrator, said the county would move quickly to make sure public schools and the Eastern Shore Community College develop training programs to fill prison jobs. "If it's going to be here, we need to capitalize on it," said Harris. "We need to reverse the economic situation here. Period." This is a common trend now, as prisons housing mostly poor People of Color from inner-cities are placed in depressed, white rural areas, which then maintain and profit from the imprisonment of People of Color.

This prison was first slated in 1993 to be a 750-bed facility—half the size of what is now being planned. Ron Angelone, director of the Department of Corrections, said the planned facility would be larger because the state doesn't have enough maximum-security prisons.

We have our inklings that this will either be a Super-Max (or "control unit") prison, or else it will house a super-max prison within the maximum-security prison. We will continue to research the plans for this prison, and appreciate any information about construction of this or other new prisons in Virginia.

(Source: Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, 11/5/94)

DEMONSTRATE IN SUPPORT OF MUMIA ABU JAMAL & AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

at the inauguration of
Pennsylvania's new governor in
Harrisburg, PA on
JANUARY 17, 1995

Pennsylvania's new governor is promising to sign death warrants & resume executions in PA. We need to raise the political costs for him to do that by mobilizing opposition from the start.

Free Mumia! Abolish the Death Penalty!

For more info contact the Concerned
Friends & Family of Mumia Abu Jamal
at (215) 476-8812
PO Box 19709, Philly, PA 19143

(if you're in the DC area and want to go,
contact us at (202) 667-2524 to
coordinate rides / transportation)

Help Save Cynthia Ann Greene's Life

Medical care at the Central California Women's Facility is killing women with AIDS. Three women died between January and March of this year at the prison. One woman, Sonja Stapels, was repeatedly ignored by medical staff despite numerous attempts by her cellmates to get her medical care. She was diagnosed with AIDS one week before dying in her cell. Critically ill patients are routinely refused medical care, misdiagnosed or given inappropriate medication, and quarantined for non-infectious diseases.

A prison term should not mean a death sentence. Right now there are three women critically ill with AIDS-related complications being housed in the Chowchilla prison infirmary. Their visits are denied or curtailed which means dying prisoners spend their last days in prison without seeing their families or loved ones. Prisoners with terminal illnesses should be allowed to return to their family and friends in the community.

California Department of Corrections (CDoC) Director James Gomez has just turned down Cynthia Ann Greene's compassionate release request. Cynthia Greene has only one T-cell, lives in the prison infirmary, is losing weight and cannot keep her food down. She is still recovering from AIDS-related pneumonia. According to Director Gomez, she is still not sick enough to be released! The medical staff and the Chowchilla prison administration have already approved her early release. **Director Gomez must be convinced to follow the advice of his medical staff and sign the paperwork.**

Compassionate release is the only hope for critically ill prisoners trapped in a prison system of criminal medical neglect. The CDoC has repeatedly refused to comply with federal court decrees and its own internal recommendations to meet minimum standards of medical care. The Coalition to Support Women Prisoners at Chowchilla and the women prisoners inside have been successful twice this year in winning compassionate release for two dying prisoners. **Your help is needed to save the life of Cynthia Ann Greene.**

Send a message today to Director Gomez! Community pressure can make a difference! Fax or call:

Director James Gomez Fax: (916) 322-2877
Phone: (916) 445-7688

Demand that Director Gomez approve Cynthia Ann Greene's (W29756) compassionate release so that she may return home to her family.

**Coalition to Support Women Prisoners at Chowchilla, P.O. Box 14844
San Francisco, CA 94114; (510) 530-6214 or (415) 641-4156**

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

have been formally approved to shoot inmates with inside Virginia's prisons for disobeying an order. I can only guess this is to take out only remaining possession, out lives.

(Vincent X is an inmate at Powhatan Correctional Center)

ARE YOU UNEMPLOYED? HERE IS WHERE THE JOBS ARE AT.

With unemployment on the rise and the government doing its usual -- and that's lying, saying it has decreased -- only a fool wouldn't see the shutdowns of big corporations and layoffs across the country putting poor people and people of color out of work. Of course you know as well as myself that people of color are and have been the backbone of the labor in this imperialist country. And the government is giving these companies kickbacks to compensate their closing. And what do the oppressed get? A KISS OFF! repression that leads to oppression and its next stage is incarceration.

Wake up my people and see the move now, because if you don't you will definitely see it in the future when you become within the belly of the beast. LOCKED UP THAT IS.

I am here to tell you that jobs are inside the wall, not out. Its called unicorn industry and its government run and owned, and its stock holders are private companies, judges, politicians and all the other so-called rich and elite. Their motive is to get richer and keep you poorer. To keep you fooled, keeping you asleep while they get rich and the poor more oppressed and fooled.

The imperial pigs brings these drugs into this country in the first place. They know exactly who's doing drugs, so when your number is pulled you're locked up and become a villain of society.

Years ago i was reading the Washington Post, and the front page was covered with a photo. I never seen a photo blurred in this paper so it captured my attention. As I read the article I found out that that photo was taken in Russia from a satellite. It was saying that Russia could read the tag numbers off cars leaving the White House to Virginia into the caves

the politicians got stashed away for the purpose of habitating when either side pushed the button for a nuclear war. **Oh yeah that's right,** i said. To say you don't possibly think they can track chemical companies, drug fields and not know who the owners of these ingredients that put drugs onto our streets do you? The u.s. has one of the most sophisticated aircraft in the world and believe me don't no ship or aircraft go undetected by all this sophisticated equipment and radar. They know drugs don't come from within but from outside to within. Hell they got all of our telephones bugged. Think about it.

So, let us take this situation in-depth, let us dissect this diabolical ostracism and see does it make sense, is what I'm saying true or false. Instead of being judged, you be the judge for once in your life. And I'm open for comments on this subject. So without further ado lets get into this fool-proof scheme of the government of this so-called land of the free and land of milk and honey. A country who pays no attention to its own problem but funds arms and invades third world countries, again people of color are targets for these pigs to control and enslave. Lets see what we got here.

They close big corporations, layoffs, give them kickbacks for closing, putting thousands of people out of jobs, they must eat, they must feed their families, they must survive the best way they know how. And of course we can't all rap, act or play basketball so we get into drugs whether its using them to escape reality and then problem is right back in front of you when you come down, or selling them, but you are involved. Then when its time for an election or the funding of some law agency or for another prison they come straight into your neighbors house and lock him up and you say: "I didn't know he sold drugs, he was such a fine guy." Question, if you didn't know and you see him everyday, talk to him and everything how in the hell did the pigs know, because their distributors told on him, that's how, with help of course from

someone they picked out to betray him. And the first thing they do is freeze his account, confiscate all his property, put him on the boob tube and say he's responsible for X amount of killings, he grossed this amount of income and on and on.

Now comes the courts, he has no money for an attorney of his choice so the government land him on one of their attorneys who for real runs back and tells the prosecutor everything. The lawyer comes to visit you saying the government is giving you a deal. Monty Hall, lets make a deal, they can give you life but they will only give you 50 years if you take a cop and rat on someone, That's the deal, 50 years for life and a rat for the rest of your life. 50 years is life under this new guideline system that they got rigged up. A person would have to do at least 45 years on 50 years. What a deal. If you go to trial you only go through the stages just to say you were afforded your so-called constitutional rights, the old fake out.

And that's when you come to one of these federal prisons that they got from coast to coast and still building them as you read this article. You see a counselor when you arrive and the first thing he tells you is you have to pay a fine and restitution, "do you want to go into our prison factory?" BAM, you are unicorn bound whether you like it or not. They pay you 27 cents an hour, even when the government made it law that all private companies must pay minimum wages. They themselves is not paying or practicing their own law. They go under the "guise" of saying inmates are paying for their room and board and the taxpayers are so naive, non-caring. When taxes go up every year, one of the reasons they give is prisons and to build new ones. They put on the tv and in the papers we have to get the criminals off the street, but never do people think for themselves, where is the unicorn money going? Why isn't unicorn allocating any funds to building prisons or kickback into the system. I tell

you why: they are the rich and they are hiding, so you never know where those funds go or who is a shareholder, but you can bet just any broker or average investor will get their greedy little hands on any stock. All politicians, millionaires, prominent private corporations, but not an average citizen. Its a select few, its a gang, That's why they passed the gang law because they know just how strong uniting can be. Look at them, a gang!

Oh yes unicorn needs you, and the only qualification is you become a convict. Unicorn makes hundreds of millions of dollars per prison and some states have state industries in state prisons. They rank no. 10 in the u.s. for money making companies.

Slavery in the first degree full proof and i tell you i wouldn't care if you're black or white all politicians, prison officials, presidents, mayors, lawyers, wardens, police, psychologists, sociologists, judges, and anyone with eyes to see knows this. Why not you? Honestly, I don't know. I always knew the government was dirty and low down but never this dirty until I became a victim in the bowels of the beast. I'm with them now, on the other side, and I am in constant contact with these deceitful deceivers every day.

Look my people they snuck this factory in the prisons years ago under the guise of giving a convict a trade and a chance to earn money. Now, today they are making you work in these slave factories, that's right, forcing you. Wouldn't care what color you or whether you was rich or a crack head they got a spot in that factory for you that runs 24 hours a day in 3 shifts and for good measure they even got Cubans, who aren't citizens and a lot of them don't even have time. Just sitting in prisons and working unicorn. They even got weekend shifts too.

And if you don't work, they extort you from buying termmos sipes, sweatsuits, radios and to buy phone credits to call you families. Then you better not breathe too loud then they'll throw you in the hole

(solitary confinement) and write you up for refusing to program. It should read refusing to slave in the slave mill. This is why I am being held in the hole, for not working in that slave mill. This I am as witness from this situation all because we refuse to work in that mill. I been locked up for a year now and no telling how long I'll remain in this hole for simply not wanting to work in the mill, not other details, only the slave mill. I have all kinds of police and counselors coming to my cell door and asking me are you ready to work in the mill? I say hell no. Then they threaten me and say if I don't work in the mill I will never get out of the hole. WELL! So you tell me what time it is.

All the jobs, my people, are in prison all private companies are bidding to build a prison so they can get this cheap labor.

Its the thirteenth amendment in effect. That's right our own constitution advocates slavery. The thirteenth amendment was adopted December 18, 1865. It reads like this. *Section 1--- Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place to their jurisdiction. Section 2 --- Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.*

I didn't make it up check the us constitution. I only quote it for you to see how they are literally legalizing and justifying slavery. We all know that Afro American men and people of color are the only ones getting locked up. Falling prey to their diabolical scheme and becoming slaves legally. Of course you're not going to see this on the 6 o'clock news or the front page of the Washington Post, but when brothers and sisters try and pass this reading you put a pep in you step or reject them all together when they are bringing you the truth uncut, they aren't running for congress or president. So what are the motives of informing you?

I'm sure it can be said that the comrades that's passing this news out and

myself who is writing this are for the same reason and that's to WAKE YOU UP! WAKE YOU UP TO THESE PEOPLE -- DECEITFUL, CONNIVING, MONEY HUNGRY, POWER HUNGRY, OPPRESSIONOUS PIGS that putting us, our people into slavery. Oppressing the poor, uneducated Afro-American and people of color who has been getting duped, beat, raped and robbed from our great great grandparents down to us. Let it stop now, let it stop now at us. Don't let this cruel system put its hooks into our children or our future children, because if you do you're saying its okay.

What can we do? First, start educating yourself and your children, so that the children will not become victims and be victimized by these pigs, as they did our fore-fathers and mothers. And this vicious cycle has repeated itself over and over. Help put an end to this oppression. Stand up and tell these pigs that you're tire of their repression and oppression. Unite among your people come together as one, because we have been divided long enough. Stand up, unite, for divided we fall and we will continue to fall. We have fallen long enough. We ain't falling no more. We are at the bottom and there isn't no where else to go but up. United we stand, We are mad and we are not taking no more we are on the rise.

This is what its about, this is why more Blacks and people of color are in prison: MODERN DAY SLAVERY.

LEST WE FORGET -- STRUGGLING,
Elvin Porter
18841-083
P.O. Box 1000
Leavenworth, KS 66048

Knowledge With A Request

BROTHERS, SISTERS; if I may request a few moments of your time to share an experience that these no good fascist government pigs did to me and have done and are doing to my people. The fbi and the arlington police manifested illegal tactics and the court of law turned its head and assisted them. Our so called government officials using their inherent powers for vindictive and profitable reasons. I was victimized for basically three reasons and those reasons are: one, being that I was Black, two I was dumb, uneducated to their law and their rules and three, slavery for bucks.

Since then I've been studying their law and discovered everything those low down filthy pigs did was totally illegal to their own law. This is an ongoing problem and no one seems to be saying a damn thing or doing a damn thing about what's happening. These animals are literally taking Black uneducated people all the way to the left. These pigs are cheating according to their law and without us knowing, and us being the only one in those courtrooms dumbfounded to their theatrical theatrics. They use words and rules so we don't even know what they are talking about, we sit there wondering if they got the right person because of the words being foreign to us, the lies, the cheating and your lawyer assisting them. He knows that you're going to be swallowed up by his colleagues who he just ate lunch with. And the DA's check having the same signature as your attorney's. Believe that my people. Your attorney will write a motion or two and an objection from time to time to keep it illusive to those of us that don't know no better. Any of you who have been victimized, being in jail or a love one in jail, know exactly what I'm talking about.

So you can continue to turn your head to these filthy swine entrapping us with the drugs, and tricking us in those court rooms and taking our lives in these slave camps, giving us two or more life sentences, if you want to; but one thing is for sure and two things for certain if you're Black, of color or uneducated, your turn will surely come. How in the hell do a person do two or three life sentences? HOW? This is the going rate of the sentences these people are issuing out to you, your brother or sister, mother or father or whoever. From those pigs actions I see a lot of anger and no respect for human life. What person in his right mind or with love for human life could take another person's life and freedom and put him in a slave factory to make money off him? He's locked-up, family drifting away, lonely as hell and these jerks want us to slave for them while they make money off us. This is what's happening. And that was their greedy goal when they invaded Africa centuries ago and it remains the very same today.

My experience starts like this, the fbi and the arlington pigs came to my place of residence without a search warrant, handcuffed me and my fiancée and searched the house. These pigs found no evidence of no wrongdoing. They threatened my fiancée and called her names. Then these filthy pigs took me to the fbi building, where the fbi photographed, fingerprinted and tried to question me. Instead of these pigs taking me to court, they instead passed me to the arlington pigs right in their office and it was the arlington pigs who took to superior court and lied and said I was a fugitive and I was charged in the state of virginia for bank robbery. That was a damn lie and they had some vicious plans in store for me if I didn't cooperate which I will never do. NEVER! These pigs didn't have one shred of evidence when they locked me up, but they gave me a \$600,000 bond and put me in a well lit cell with a 24 hour camera monitoring system. While I was in the

cell they were going to work on me, creating evidence. They planted a lawyer to represent me. A police in that same jail said thru comparison, a latent fingerprint, which was one of five prints that was found on a "Big Gulp Cup" was mine. They gave the fbi the same fingerprints and the fbi's sophisticated forensic test came back inconclusive. Now you know that the fbi analyst tested these prints to the hilt, but it couldn't be used. Yet the DA pig didn't tell the court and neither did my attorney. I wouldn't have found out either if I didn't buy documents and discover this information. But, what's so hurting, my people, they got a Black sister on the stand to lie and say that she compared my fingerprint and it belonged to me. A sister, my people. A sister doing those dirty creature's dirty work. Then these vicious pigs threatened a brother who supposedly had picked up some bank money the bankrobbers supposedly dropped. He told them on the first interview he couldn't ID anyone but when the pigs found out he supposedly picked up some money then they went to work on him, they threatened him and told him they were going to charge him. The brother fled the jurisdiction and everything. They caught him supposedly before the Speedy Trial Act was up but it was already up legally. My plant attorney said nothing again, he does that well. It gets better for them but worse for me: the guy who fled was their star witness, he stated in court that they promised him and threatened him and he still didn't positively ID. The DA asked him with a courtroom full of crackers to ID me and he still couldn't do it, only similar or alike now if its a fact that some Blacks robbed the bank wouldn't I be similar? Then the other pig witness was a jailhouse rat they planted from the inside of the jail which is illegal. He testified that he heard me ask another prisoner to purchase me something on the canteen list because my money came too late and I couldn't go to canteen. That's it my people, no more,

probably less, but no more. I got thirty years, an all white jury in the first slave state found me guilty. It was a weapon (gun) in court but the judge pig didn't include that as evidence but don't you know they let that gun in the jury's deliberation room as evidence. This is how blatant and vicious these crackers are. This is how much they care for another human life, that they are willing to cheat. Those vicious crackers gave me 30 years and now they want me to work in the factory. Yes, they are telling me that I got to work in a slave factory that rank number 10 in the united snakes of amerikkkan financially, for 27 cents an hour. This is what it was all about all the time for so many of our sisters and brothers. **SLAVERY, SLAVERY** in the first degree.

These crackers practice to the letter Brother Malcolm X's message that was meant for us. "By Any Means Necessary" we must fight this struggle. And damn if these pigs didn't master this message that a brother intended for us to execute and damn if these imperialistic oppressionous, repressionous pigs reverse the words and we as Malcolm's people let this happen. Think about it!

So my people you see where I am coming from and you see I am fighting this imperialistic system who plans on slaving us Blacks, uneducated and poor people according to the 13th amendment. It's never too late, never. It's a perfect plan and closer than you think. I been in a cell for a year all because I refuse to kiss the hand that's slapping the shit out of our people, I been in a cell all because I refuse to be pimped. They got me locked up for 23 hours a day, because I refuse 27 cents while the politicians, judiciary officials, big corporation owners, and the elite get millions and billions. I am deprived granted privileges because I refuse to help fund other prisons for the future of my people. I get my food pushed thru a celldoor like and animal in a cage because I choose to be strong and not put up with

their bullshit. However, during this writing my Mother a retired D.C. Public School teacher who is 72 years of age never done a wrong thing in her life but give me strength and knowledge about this gangster government the best she could, fell ill. She has diabetes, possible amputation of the legs and I asked these Ph.D. pig administrators to send me to another prison closer so I may see my mother. Don't you know they looked at me as though I am asking to go home with their car. One official told me "we don't award people who laying down on us." This is what status they got me under, "Lay Down Status", all because I refuse to be part of or support a system who plans on locking my people up and putting them in these slave camps, that's what I would be doing and I refuse. My mom told me when I called she said, "don't let them crackers use my illness as a bargaining chip and make you go against what's real and what you believe in." This is what she told me as I listened with tears

in my eyes. I received a lot of strength, and a lot of love.

With all of this going on I filed 3 Rule-33 motions for a new trial. They avoided 2 of them, I'm constantly reminding them that its timely and legal. I called the courts, the clerk assures me that these motions will be responded to. That's been over 5 months when it took three days to find me guilty and it took them another 4 days to ship me half way across the united snakes of america. So I filed a Civil Rights Civil Suit which the courts are letting me proceed to this writing. In the meantime I got these administration officials here in leavenworth penitentiary in court for advocating slavery and I am also awaiting to get my day in court to address my people being forced and extorted in that uncor slave mill or be locked up 23 hours in a cell with his food pushed thru a cell door which my brothers here are so afraid of. The pimps, murderers, drug kingpins, robbers, women beaters, rapists, thieves,



and no lives are being PIMPED by the united snakes government pigs. Not just me and a few other brothers and sisters and I would like to take this time to say to those brothers and sisters who is on lay down status "more power to the people and remain strong" You're not alone in this struggle.

However, I do need each and everybody's support to get back in court for a New Trial, and to get a "Hardship Transfer" closer to my mother so I can see her before nature takes its course. I haven't seen her in 3 years, your support will be appreciated and I will definitely respond to each and every one writing to support the CAUSE and me getting closer to my mother who I come from, the tunnel of life in which I come.

Below is the judge's name, request in my behalf a New Trial or to Vacate this sentence. Also write the wardens of usp-leavenworth for a "Hardship Transfer". I also asked congresswoman eleanor holmes norton for assistance, she may need to be reminded. And of course I have my family, the abc-dc anarchists to assist and support me. I end my communications for now but not my struggle and my battle for me and my people. POWER TO THE PEOPLE, MY PEOPLE!

LEST WE FORGET ITS STILL A WAR,

ELVIN PORTER

18841-083

P.O. Box 1000

Leavenworth, KS 66048-1000

HELP A FRIEND!

Contact the Judge to voice your support for a New Trial or Vacating the 30 year sentence (Case No. Cr-92-426-A). If you call ask for the Court Clerk

Honorable Judge Claude Hilton
United States District Court For
The Eastern District of Virginia
200 South Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22313
Tel 703/557-5127

Ask Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton what has come of her office's inquiry into the forced labor situation and the request for Hardship Transfer:

1151 Chicago St., SE
Washington, DC 20020-5734
Tel: 202/678-8900; 785-5065

Write to Warden William Scott, or Casemanager John Trott supporting the granting of a Hardship Transfer to be closer to family and loved ones:

P.O. Box 1000
Leavenworth, KS 66048

Please send us a copy of any letters you send and any responses you receive so that we can keep a count:

Claustrophobia ABC
P.O. Box 77432
Washington, DC 20013

An Introduction to the Anarchist Black Cross

We reprint below a portion of Lorenzo Komboa Ervin's introduction to his A Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network. Write to us for a copy of this pamphlet, which has been influential in the revival of the ABC in North America.

The Anarchist Black Cross is an international network of autonomous groups of anarchists who work to ensure that Anarchist, class war, and other prisoners aren't forgotten.

The Anarchist Red Cross was started in Tsarist Russia to organize aid for political prisoners captured by the police, and to organize self-defense against political raids by the Cossack Army. During the Russian civil war, they changed the name to the Black Cross in order to avoid confusion with the Red Cross who were organizing relief in the country. After the Bolsheviks seized power, the Anarchist movement moved the ABC offices to Berlin and continued to aid prisoners of the new regime as well as victims of Italian fascism and others. The Black Cross fell apart during the 1930s depression due to the incredible demand for its services and a decline in financial aid. But in the late 1960s the organization resurfaced in Britain, where it first worked to aid prisoners of the Spanish resistance, which had not in fact died after the civil war and was fighting the dictator Franco's police. Now it has expanded and works in many different areas, with contacts and other Black Cross groups in many countries around the world. The North American section started in the early 1980s.

The ABC hopes to bring attention to the plight of prisoners in general, psychiatric prisoners, and to Anarchist and class war prisoners in particular; and, through contact with and information about Anarchist prisoners, inspire an Anarchist resistance and support movement on the outside. Although we aren't able (with a few exceptions) to send regular financial aid to our comrades in prison, we do keep in regular contact with as many prisoners as possible, make visits, and do whatever we can to prevent prisoners from being isolated. We fund-raise on behalf of prisoners or defense committees in need of funds for legal cases or otherwise, and organize demonstrations of solidarity with imprisoned Anarchists and other prisoners.

We believe, as most Anarchists do, that prisons serve no useful function (they are for the benefit of the ruling classes) and should be abolished along with the State. We differ from liberal prison reformists and groups like Amnesty International in two main ways: firstly we believe in the abolition of both prison system and the society which creates it, and we initiate all our actions with that in mind; secondly, we believe in direct resistance to achieve a stateless and classless society. Groups like Amnesty International balk at supporting anyone accused of so-called violent acts, thus insinuating that anyone who resists oppression and takes up arms in self-defense, or during a revolutionary insurrection, is not worthy or support. The message is clear: do not resist. Our message is exactly the opposite, and this is what we work to support. We share a commitment to revolutionary Anarchism as opposed to liberalism and individualism, or legalism.

